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FIRST LADY PRESENTS PRESERVATION GRANT TO MONTANA

First Lady Laura Bush presented a \$100,000 Preserve America grant to the Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office during a recent ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington.

The grant will be used for the Society's Heritage Preservation Training Initiative that builds on heritage and preservation training and technical assistance already offered by the Society's preservation office. This is the second such grant the Society has received.

"We have been working with several national, state and local experts regarding heritage tourism," Society Director Richard Sims said. "The goals of the tourism industry and preservationists do not always seem compatible, but in recent years the two groups have grown to understand what is good for preservation can be extremely fruitful for economic development."

The Society will pass the money on in the form of matching grants to Montana communities who have achieved national "Preserve America" designation. Bush also announced that Anaconda, Billings, Lewistown and Stevensville have been added to that list in Montana.

The communities who have already qualified as "Preserve America" communities are Butte-Silver Bow, Fort Benton, Great Falls, Missoula, Red Lodge, Terry and Virginia City.

Communities interested in qualifying as "Preserve America" communities and becoming eligible for the grants can get information at www.preserveamerica.gov. Those

already qualified can be placed on a contact list for the new grant money by e-mailing mkaisersynness@mt.gov.

By working together the tourism industry and historical preservationists can appeal for tourism dollars to be spent for “product development” by doing such things as creating historic districts that benefit both groups, Sims said.

“Preserve America” is a White House initiative in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies.